subsidiary of IBP, has been suspended because of non-placement of order by oil companies;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the action taken by Government for resuming the production; and

(c) if not, the order position on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) IOCL, HPCL & BPCL floated the tenders for procurement of cylinders separately and during the finalization of tender, some of the tenderers had gone to various High Courts challenging the tender process. At present, whole tender process is *sub-judice* and final decision on the order quantity for procurement of LPG cylinders from M/s Balmer Lawrie would depend upon the final judgement of Delhi High Court.

Abolition of subsidies on kerosene and LPG

277. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are firm on resolve to abolish the administered pricing system for petroleum products by 1st April, 2002; and

(b) if so, what arrangements are contemplated to absorb subsidies on kerosene and LPG?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The subsidies on kerosene for public distribution system and the domestic LPG are contemplated to be met from the budget of the Government.

Oil pool deficit

278. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether oil pool deficit has increased recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the strategy of Government to manage the oil pool account;

(d) whether Government propose to increase oil prices in view of increased oil pool deficit; and

(e) if not, how Government propose to manage the oil pool account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The estimated oil pool deficit, as on 31-3-2000 and 31-3-2001, was around Rs. 6256 crore and Rs. 12,600 crore respectively.

(c) to (e) The management of the oil pool account is a continuous process and the strategy to manage the same *inter alia* depends on various factors *viz.* the prevalent international prices of crude oil/petroleum products, exchange rate, duty structure, domestic selling prices of controlled products (motor spirit, high speed diesel, kerosene for public distribution and domestic LPG) etc.

No proposal to increase the prices of the controlled products is under consideration of the Government at present.

Cost of linking of Ganga and Cauvery rivers

279. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA:
SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it is the dream of Indians that Ganga and Cauvery rivers should be linked;

(b) if so, whether it is economically feasible; and

(c) what would be the approximate cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Irrigation (now Ministry of Water Resources) and the Central Water Commission formulated a National Perspective Plan for water resources development in 1980 which envisages inter-linkages among various Peninsular river (including Cauvery) and the Himalayan rivers (including Ganga) for transfer of water from water surplus basins to water deficit basins for optimum utilization of water resources. The plan envisages 17 water transfer linkages under the Peninsular River Development Component and 14 water transfer linkages under the Himalayan Rivers Development Component. To follow it up, the Government